

Conversation with 76 year old white female, West Virginia (Transcription)

85-16 M8 B(3)

I.<unintelligible text>....don't know how easy he can be hurt....now that's the truth.

FW. Tell me,...gett back to uh, sittin' around that fireplace, what kinda ghost stories do you remember any of 'em?

I. NOoooooooo I can't remember 'em honey...about the a bout the....stories I said there's always pretty much stories, but I can tell you about I can tell you about a little experience I had, 'bout...just before Florence was born,

FW. Tell me, tell me all about it.

I. Uh, just before she was born, we lived over at, above Hinton, I....Berthy.....was the name of the place up on the mountain...

FW.. hunhun.

I. Well, you see I that was Nelly's daddy Ingo, you see we lived over there so well the church house, what you might say, it was just about like from,...'bout to Mae's house right up here from our house. So One night I thought, well, I was always kinda afraid to stay by

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myself, you know, just me, you know, it was getting about time for me to get in, so Ingo, he'd went over to this man's house where we carried our water from, and to get some water, and, ooh the moon was so pretty and bright and I thinks well, heck hit's dark and I hear him a-talking, a-setting over there in the field where the spring is, I'll just walk down the road and meet him, you know, ooh, it was so pretty an' light. I got down there an' I hearn something shut the churdhhouse door but I didn't see a thing, and the moon, oh the moon was as bright as daylight and I didn't see nothing. <And?> he come out on the walk, pitty-pat pitty-pat pitty-pat and I just looked with all my eyes and I couldn't see a thing, come out that gate, iron gate, slammed it an' hit just cracked just like and iron gate it would just slam.

85-17

I. And all at once, something was right in front of me. Looked like it had a white sheet around it and no head. I liketa died. That was just a little while before Florence was born. I turned around and I went back to the house just as fast as I could go, and about that time, Ingo come along and he says, "I set the water up," and he said "I'm going down to the churchhouse," he said, "I hearn somebody go in" he said, "They went through the gate," and he walked across there and he opened the door and he went into the churchhouse. They had him a-looking after the chruch, you know, if anybody went in and he went down there. He got seen something was the matter with me, I couldn't hardly talk. I told him, I said, "Well, something or other, I hearn it, I seen it, whenever I started over to meet you, and I didn't, I couldn't get no further." So he went down there and he took his lantern, of course we didn't have flashlights then, took his lantern, had an old ladder, just spokes, just to go up beside of the house, he looked all behind the organ, all behind every bench, he went upstairs and looked in the garret, not a thing in the world he could find. Not a thing. Well, it went on there for a right smart little while and one day Miss Allen was down there. Her girls come down there very often and sweep the church and clean it. So one evening they come up to the house, you know, and I's telling them. They said, "Honey, don't feel

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bad about that", she said, "long as you live here, you'll see something like that." Said "they was in time of the war, they was a woman, that somebody'd cut her head off and they'd buried in the lower end of the grave down there," and said "There'd been so many people live in the house we live in, would see her," and said "That's what it was said just had a white sheet wrapped around her."

FW. <unintelligible text>

85-18

I. Yeah. And we didn't. live there very long cause I wouldn't stay. He worked away and I had. I's just scared to death but still Miss Allen told me, said "Don't be afraid cause ain't a thing gonna hurt you." Said "Just don't be afraid." But you know how you'd feel. But now, but honey, that's the first thing I've ever seen that I was even scared about, but now, I'll tell you, now that was..that was scary. Just, you just hear something like that and you look and you don't see a thing.

FW. <unintelligible text>

I. Can't see it and then something right in the road, right in front of you stops you, and it just looked like it had a big sheet, just a-wrapped around him and no head. Now that's the way it looked. And I told Miss Allen, she said, "Well honey, everybody that lives in that house has seen the same thing but she said "hain't nothing gonna hurt you." Said "because I wouldn't be afraid," I said, "Oh my goodness!" "Be afraid," I said, why, when <unintelligible text> a little after dark, I was scared pink

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FW. Yeah, I guess. Things like that scare me too. I'm just a chicken. Well I'm scared of the dark

I. Well, I ain't scared of the dark.

FW. I always have been.

I. Well, little bitty things that they, you know, things like that that <gap> as old as I was, and old as I am, that's the first thing in my life, and that's before Florence was born, and Florence, well, she's...I just don't know how old she is, but she's uh...shets fifty...three or four, I don't know just which. And I said that's the first time that I'd ever seen anything that you know, frightened me and things like that,

FW. Oh, I guess that would. You don't guess that it was somebody playing a trick

I. No, hit wasn't that. They said everybody'd lived there'd seen that.

85-19

I. Said they was right there. Said <gap> that said unknown. It's writ on a tombstone, where he was buried on the lower end, said unknown. So it was just somebody that they didn't know who it was or nothing. Miss Allen said that they had told her that it was the rebels, you know, when they..the war was going on, had killed her. Well, Alot of things, people's gonna see, if they live long enough for things to come you know they just have to mark on that.

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FW. Whew, I hope I don't ever see anything like that. I'd probably just pass right out.

I. Well, anymore, I said, course I don't feel too awfully afraid, but we'd never, nothing's never bothered us since we lived up here, and ain't hearn nothing but what we ain't found out what it was. So I don't <gap>. Course, I..we've got a good gun. I still can shoot.

FW. Oh, is that right? Did you used to hunt?

I. I never did used to hunt, but I used to keep a gun around the house all the time, and I've killed rabbits, and I've killed ground squirrels, and things like that that'd be around the house, you know.

FW. Good shot?

I. I used to do pretty good with a sixteen. Course I may be kinda nervous now, it's been a long time. But still I guess I said I could hold it up enough for that..to do that.

FW. Still know what to do

I. Still know what to do if anything was to take place.

FW. My goodness. <unintelligible text>. And what kind of tales did your daddy tell you?
Just

I. Oh, I can't ... a lot of things, you know, in his days, how he hunted, and all these things he'd tell us. Things how he'd do, you know, and how he'd trap and all this stuff, you know,

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away back; how he'd catch deers. He used to, said he used to sharpenthis -(stob) and set it right where they'd jump over the fence, and they'd jump over the

85-20

I. fence and jump on this stob and they couldn't get off it, see, That's cruel, wasn't it?

FW. Yeah, sounds pretty cruel, it would be painful, wouldn't kill them

I. Wouldn't kill them, see, they'd just jump over there and they couldn't get off. And then, they said, early of the morning, used to be so many turkeys and things wild 'uns, said you;d see them on the fence and around where they'd roost. Said he used to keep turkey all the time to eat, you know, just kill them, And there used to be bear, plenty of it, I reckon, when he's first married and lived back out on the woods.

FW. Dow, did they..did they kill bear to eat?

I. No, they didn't kill none to eat nor nothing. The bears used to go and get their pigs and things and carry them off

FW. Oh, Isee. Did you ever see one?

I. Yeah, I've seen a bear, used to pass school when us kids was going to school. They used to be a man go along with the bear, you know, and have him acting, doing things. Climbing trees and dancing, carrying on, wrassling and everything like that.

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FW. Did you have to go very far to go to school?

I. No, we..we had to go about a mile. And when they's big snows on, it'd be knee deep our Daddy used to drag a little log, you know get on the horse, and drag a little log to school and back for us to walk. in. And then sometimes, he'd take horses, and we'd all pile on the horses, you know, they's six of us, and ride the horses, and then he'd bring them back.

FW. How far along in school did you get?

I. I don't know, honey, I (done)...Sin is I don't think I got very far, not, I don't guess it's no further than sixth or seventh grade because grandmother was sick and my mother was sick, and..

FW. Well that's what happened to my mom.

I. Yeah, and my half sister was sick, and I had to stay at home, so I

85-21

I. just...Isaid...you know what? I useta couldn't...I useta couldn't couldn't count. Why, I useta couldn't count anything til I..til I got me some work up here at the...to the White front diner down there next to City Hall where the police station is. That white front diner set there...and they called it the white front diner. I worked for Ed Tazberry and Vinnie learnt me how to count.

FW. Is that right

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I. She'd say now Lessie, you know, the plates'd be 90 cents a plate, she;d tell me then, add the salad and the coffee, you know if they got a extra cup of coffee everything, she'd tell me how to count and everything and I learned, when I'd fix a plate, you know, I'd start count...But my head, as I went on, you know, then she'd say, if you can't make it, count on your fingers. She learnt me to count.

FW. That's good, yeah.

I. And I said, you know, I worked up there at the Lloyd's pastry shop for over three year.

FW. Where did you work?

I. At Lloyd's pastry shop, Princeton. When we lived up there.

FW. I see. How long ago was that?

I. Oh, that there's been a right smart little while ago. Nellie was (a-) living, let's see, she was living down here at uh, she was living down here at Camp Creek then, I reckons, in that house up on the hill above a brick church.

FW. Was your...did you all always go to church on Sundays and stuff?

I. Nearly always had to go. We used to ride a sled and had old oxens in it. (laughter)

FW. To a kid, that would sound like fun today, though, you never get to do those things.

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I. They'd love it. They'd love it cause I know we used to fix uh...heat a rock real hot and wrap it up in an old chop...chop sack and lay it

85-22

I. in the sled on some hay and Grandmother'd set in a chair and put that rock to her feet when it was cold weather, so she wouldn't get cold when they'd go to church.

FW. I'll bet.

I. Yeah, and we used to ride the sled and them old oxen in it. As I told your mom, I said, people...people <gap> they might ride now, I don't know if they would or not, most of the kids think it's fun, I guess, than driving.

FW. Did you ever have quilting bees or

I. Have what?

FW. Quilting bees.

I. Oh good gracious, yeah.

FW. Or what, what do they call them, log r...

I. Yeah, log rolling sand grass hackings, and things like that. We they used to, we used to have them and they'd have, was cleaning up an old field, and had a whole, they's a

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most...men over there, you know, a-cutting timber and a-rolling logs and things and had a quilting and had a big supper, or a lot of stuff roasted, such as mutton, you know, and had ham and all that stuff, you know, fixed up. And uh when uh Lonnie Richman and Andy and them lived out here, at Shady Springs, that was..that was Poppa's first wife's sister's children. So they was there one time when we got the quilt done, they was a whole lot of women quilting, when they got the quilt done, they wrapped it around one's head, they thought would be married next, you know. I've seen <gap> and <gap> run Lundy all over the hillside with the quilt, trying to wrap it around his head.

FW. And what were the log rollings, is that what they called them?

I. Yes, log..just hack down bresh and have logs and then roll them down you know, and pile them up, for wood, or something like that. But people used to do things like that anymore, but lord, you never have it.

85-23

I. You can't have anything anymore like that, don't seem like.

FW. They used to help each other out.

I. Yeah, and women if they got in tough place, needed a something done, like peeling apples or, you know, making apple butter or something, and they'd just go and help, and stay and help you, you know, and do things. But people don't do that too much anymore.

FW. I'm sure you used to grow gardens and can.

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I. Oh, grow gardens, hain't no name honey. Another thing I'll tell you, when Corus and Erna was little, we was up to the garden one, early one morning after Mother died and ooh, it come up the awfulest rain I ever seen, the blackest cloud come up, and the wind started blowing, blowed the buggy from under the shed clear over again the garden fence, and, so my daddy, he went and got that back, kinda tied it there, you know, fixed it so it couldn't blow away, and we looked out directly he said don't start to the house, he said, because it'll blow you away, it was blowing so hard. So I was worried about Erna and Corus at the house, they was little, you see, er, their mother'd just died, not been long. So I looked out, and we had a strawstack on top of the mountain, and the wind had carried that straw, hit just come over you know how straw'd look when it was a-flying through the air. Oh, it was scary. It scared me near to death. And, you know, there was enough straw up on the upper porch at the house to make two or three...straw beds. Just blowed up there, and them little old kids had pulled trunks and put chairs and had their dresser and everything put up agin the door and had it locked, and they'd fix it...and they was scared todeath. And quick as the wind ceased enough, til I thought I could get to the house, I took to the house to see about them, you know, and they likta never got all that stuff moved back. They was just little and they moved all that stuff back

FW. Well, they had good sense about it

I. Oh, good gracious, they sure did, but oh, we had a time, getting all

85-24

I. that straw off'n the yard, and on the porch and everything. Hit was.. Hit was awful to see all that straw piled up there

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FW. Sounds almost like a tornado

I. Just so much wind, you see and it was a big old straw stack and it just lifted it and just started blowing.

FW. So you used to put up a lot of canned goods.

I. Oh, we used to have an awful lot, and we used to get out in the woods and ramble the woods and hunt wild grapes and put them down in molasses in churns and..

FW. Put them in molasses?

I. Uh-huh. And put up...we'd put up sixteen gallon barrels of cucumbers and then we'd put up green tomatoes in barrels, pickle them, corn, pickle beans, make kraut

FW. Now, I never heard of putting grapes in molasses. What was that for?

I. Well you.. that kinda preserves them. They're real good to eat.

FW. Is that right. Makes them sweet.

I. Yeah, uh-huh. We used to get just churns full.

FW. I never had that. Never heard of it.

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I. And then, uh, we'd make our kraut in a great big old barrel, be thrity gallon barrel, and oh we had the most cabbage. And daddy fixed a long handle and fixed a thing on the end of it, real sharp, and when we put the cabbage down in there, we'd just chop them all up good with that sharp thing. We got them all chopped up real good. And then, you see, we'd have..we'd put weights on it boy, talking about kraut, we'd have lots. That's about all you could have is just your meats and your vegetables and things likethat.

FW. Yeah, you don't have all this fancy stuff like you do today. Now what about cheese? Did you ever get cheese or what.

I. Cheese, well...You didn't get none without you made it.

FW. Now, didyou make cheese?

I. We used to take the clabber milk, you know, and heat it and make that